

Solicitation DE-PS07-00ID13959
Agriculture Industry of the Future

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
As of May 15, 2000

Question 1. Although national laboratories will not be eligible for awards, their participation is encouraged as noted. I also note that "single organization awards will not be considered." If a single eligible applicant submits a proposal with some level of work performance by a single national laboratory (or even more than one national laboratory) will those proposals be considered responsive to the solicitation?

Answer 1. Yes, provided the applicant clearly identifies the unique capabilities to be used at the National Laboratory. Unique capabilities are defined as those not available in the private sector.

Question 2. If a project proposal is submitted for a project that is currently ongoing, can the 50% Cost Share include non-federal dollars spent to accomplish objectives in prior year(s)?

Answer 2. No.

Question 3. The proposal format is very specific, even including subheading levels. Additionally, this format (particularly subheadings) does not seem to run parallel with the review criterion 1-5, nor allocate the proposal space relative to the criterion point weights. Are we expected to follow the RFP outline down to the subheading level or do we have the latitude to follow the major section levels (e.g., 1.0 – 6.0) and ensure that our discussions/presentation of material within those major sections address all the subsection level points as well as the review criteria?

Answer 3. Each application must contain the information listed in SECTION II: Technical Application Requirements and follow the format outlined in that section down to the subheading level.

Question 4. Can we as a primary applicant (and as a private industrial concern) use a Federal agency [the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) specifically] as a subcontractor for a portion of the work to be performed? Note that TVA does not receive any federal funding. TVA is not a national laboratory; however, will they be treated the same as a national lab in terms of their eligibility or ineligibility for funding as a subcontractor under this solicitation?

Answer 4. Although the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a Federal Corporation, it does not receive appropriated funds. TVA would not be treated the same as a national lab in terms of their eligibility or ineligibility for funding; however, the TVA would be an acceptable subcontractor for a portion of the work to be performed.

Question 5. Page 8 of the solicitation (Section II, under 4.0 Project Plan) requires that proposals address the following: "Describe how the technology will be made available to a wide cross-section of the industry at the earliest practicable time." Our company is a private industrial company that is in the business of developing and commercializing new technologies for processing agricultural-based materials to higher value products. We would expect to have other industrial and non-industrial partners involved in our proposed effort to develop new

agricultural processing technologies in response to this solicitation. Since we will ultimately be interested in commercializing the technology we develop, what provisions or plans are envisioned (or established) by DOE for intellectual property protection? The solicitation requirement noted above – to make the technology “available to a wide cross-section of the industry at the earliest practicable time” – implies that DOE envisions widespread, unrestricted sharing of R&D results. This appears to be based on an assumption that lead organizations for proposals to DOE will be universities and/or private technology developers who will then give the technology to industry to commercialize. Would our desire to limit the sharing of technology to be developed under this solicitation be unacceptable to DOE?

Answer 5: In facilitating timely commercialization of technology developed under the subject program, we anticipate that the participants will take appropriate steps to protect any intellectual property developed under the program. With appropriate cost sharing and program concurrence, participants may obtain a waiver of DOE patent rights pursuant to 10 CFR 784. DOE will retain a paid up, nonexclusive license in any waived invention. Wide spread dissemination of technology does not mean that intellectual property will not be protected, or that it will be given away. Intellectual property provisions and guidance are generally provided at 10 CFR 600.27.

Question 6: On page 8 of the solicitation, under Section 5.0 “Technical Capabilities,” section 5.4 states that proposers are to provide “Justification for and description of needed facilities and estimated costs.” What level of detail/specificity is required for these estimated costs?

Answer 6: An outline of the estimated costs needs to be provided by cost element. However, neither justification nor substantiation is required at the time of the submittal of the application. Justification and substantiation will be requested if the offeror is selected for award.

Question 7: Page 3 of the solicitation states that cost sharing may be provided as cash or as in-kind. Will cost sharing in the form of cash receive a more favorable evaluation by DOE than in-kind cost sharing?

Answer 7: Cash and in-kind cost sharing are equally acceptable if they meet the requirements identified in the solicitation and DOE’s financial assistance rules, 10 C.F.R. Part 600.

Question 8: On page 5 of the solicitation, the last paragraph under the Applications section notes that the “front and back sides of a single sheet are counted as 2 pages. “Does this essentially require that proposers use two-sided copes for the Technical Application (assuming it is 11 to 20 pages in length)?

Answer 8: No. The backside of a single sheet would be counted as a page if it contains printed material.

Question 9: There seems to be some confusion about whether animal waste/environmental projects are possible or not for the DOE solicitation. Could you please clarify.

Answer 9: It is impossible for DOE to provide clear cut responses without detailed knowledge of each proposal. Therefore it is incumbent on potential proposers to make such determination. The program office does not wish to discourage any proposals, therefore DOE provides the following guidelines to help potential proposers make

mutually beneficial decisions.

In order for proposers to evaluate the reasonableness of their concept they must go to the basics. First they should look to the vision and roadmap documents provided in the solicitation. DOE is seeking projects that use plant-derived materials to make chemicals that in turn are used as feedstocks, instead of fossil fuels, to make a whole range of consumer goods. Another important criterion is increased efficiency of energy use in industry. Thus if fossil fuel were not now used to make a given product, a proposal to use alternative resources would not fit the solicitation. If a proposal doesn't demonstrate energy savings over conventional methods via more efficient processes it doesn't fit the solicitation. Similarly if a proposal seeks to make energy by utilizing plants, doesn't incorporate a partnering relationship among entities, and/or demonstrate a reasonable path to commercialization the proposal doesn't meet the criteria of the solicitation.

Summary of suggested decision criteria:

- Does the proposal meet one of the high priority goals in processing or utilization in the technology roadmap?
- Does the current manufacturing process for this product use petroleum?
- Would the project be able to demonstrate greater efficiency of energy use in making the product over conventional methods?
- Proposers should evaluate the possibility that their proposals will match the scope of other solicitations (for example geothermal, forest products).

Even though a given proposal may meet the criteria of the solicitation, this is no guarantee of an award; however, it will be evaluated for possible award.